

Arlington Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Jefferson Cutter House, 611 Massachusetts Ave, Arlington, MA 02474
2/15/18
8:00-9:30 p.m.
Naomi Greenfield and David Swanson, Co-Chairs of AHRC

Present: Co-Chairs Naomi Greenfield and David Swanson, Commissioners Sharon Grossman, Christopher Huvos, Christine Carney, Mel Goldsipe, Gary Horowitz, D'ondria Maxwell, Nick Minton, Sheri Baron

Absent: William Logan, Kristina Fontanez

Guests: Kristen Bauer, Yawa Degboe

Co-Chair Greenfield convened the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

1. Check-in / Meeting Roles:

Co-Chair Greenfield outlined meeting notes and accessibility of documents.

2. New Commissioner Update:

The newest Commissioner has met with the Town Manager and is waiting for the Board of Selectmen to meet.

3. Review Agenda:

Co-Chairs Greenfield and Swanson reviewed the agenda items to be discussed.

4. Citizens Open Forum:

Yawa Degboe introduced herself, including her role on the Vision 2020 Diversity Task Force and raised concerns about two recent hate incidents at Ottoson Middle School.

5. Norms, Meeting Roles and Introductions:

Norms for meetings were shared by the Co-Chairs and include the following:

- Be positive
- Be active listener -- don't interrupt
- Be a contributor
- Play a role (Timekeeper, Next Stepper)
- Assume best intentions

- Adhere to agenda -- parking lot things for another time

Each Commissioner introduced themselves, talked about their background and why they are a member of the Commission.

6. Minutes Approvals:

Commissioner Carney moved to approve the minutes as amended; Commissioner Baron seconded the motion. All but Commissioner Minton, who abstained, voted in favor.

7. Correspondence/Incidents/Complaints:

- Arlington Council on Aging (ACA) Meeting “Age-Friendly” Initiative:
 - Commissioner Huvos met with an intern at ACA. Arlington paired with the World Health Organization and AARP to become a part of the Age Friendly Initiative to be more “friendly” to older residents. The Commission was asked to sign on as a sponsor. A discussion followed regarding ways in which the Commission events can be more accessible. Commissioner Huvos will continue to follow up on this initiative.
- Incidents/Complaints
 - Two incidents were reported by the Arlington Police Department (APD) on the same day at Ottoson Middle School (OMS); it is still an active investigation in which swastikas were found in 2 bathrooms. The Commission was informed by the APD. The Interim Principal was reached out to and suggestions were provided by the Commission. Co-Chair Greenfield forwarded the principal an email that was sent to families in Needham when a similar incident occurred. The principal was encouraged to reach out to families. Some of the OMS responses included: homeroom meetings and cultural competency training for the staff. Other aspects of the incident included that Vision 2020 was informed by a parent, and there was an article in the Arlington Advocate. A discussion about the incident followed. Guest Degboe wondered whether there is a way to quickly respond to the recent events at OMS. A discussion was followed regarding using the press releases that were developed in the past and other options.

8. New roles and positions:

Co-Chair Greenfield noted that having the position of Secretary and forming a Communications sub-committee would be a way to help market the Commission, take

responsibility for communicating (i.e., social media, website, logo, newsletter, technical needs) to the community.

It has been recommended that when emailing on Commission business, Commissioners should use their personal email and cc the arlingtonhumanrights.org email address.

Commissioner Carney moved that a sub-committee be formed to handle Commission communications; Commissioner Maxwell seconded the motion. No discussion. All voted in favor.

A proposed Secretary position outline was disseminated. Commissioner Carney moved that the Commission establish a Secretary position; Commissioner Goldsipe seconded the motion. The motion was discussed. All voted in favor.

Email Issues Discussed:

It was noted that whenever a Commissioner is aware of a community event, continue to reply all on email and the events will be disseminated.

Christine Bongiorno has been contacted and there will likely be an assessment of the email system currently in use.

9. Budget Update:

Commissioners Baron, Swanson, and Greenfield will prepare a presentation to the Finance Committee.

10. AHRC Logo Update:

Co-Chair Swanson suggested that the AHRC logo selection and creation process is something that the newly formed Communication sub-committee could take on.

11. Sub-Committee Report Out:

- ADL Partnership event:
 - Commissioner Grossman described the upcoming event that the Commission is partnering with the Anti-Defamation League on regarding Hate Symbols. Commissioner Grossman moved that the Commission allocate \$500 for the event; Commissioner Horowitz seconded the motion. All voted in favor.
- Schools:

- Commissioner Grossman summarized the status of procedures for reporting incidents in the schools and school liaisons. It was agreed that at a future meeting the Commission will discuss the roles and responsibilities of school liaisons. Commissioners Grossman and Carney will follow up with the Community Relations Subcommittee of the Arlington School Committee regarding the incident reporting now that the cover letter is approved by the Commission and there has been further discussion about roles of school liaisons.

12. Community events and info:

- Arlington Reads Together 2018 – Commissioner Baron will follow up with Robbins Library about how the Commission can be helpful and involved.
- ACA Immigration Exhibit -- Commissioner Carney will follow up.
- Cultural Competency Training update – Co-Chairs will follow up on dates and specifics.
- AHRC Anniversary was discussed. Potential ideas included an “Everyday Hero” award, and connecting with another important event such as celebrating the beginning of the Rainbow Commission. A motion was made by Commissioner Goldsipe to form a Subcommittee to discuss the potential for a permanent, annual AHRC event; Commissioner Baron seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

13. Catch All:

Co-Chair Greenfield asked if any other items needed to be raised.

14. Next steps:

Co-Chair Swanson reviewed next steps.

Commissioner Carney moved to adjourn. Commissioner Grossman seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Commissioner Sharon Grossman.